

## Transportation and Infrastructure

Mike's top priority is promoting policies that support a healthy economy and job creation. Since being elected to Congress, Mike has been a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee because of the important role the committee plays in our economy.

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Work on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

From his position on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I Committee), Mike has fought for substantial transportation funding increases in Maine to help boost our economy and improve safety for our citizens. The significant increases Mike was able to secure for our state continues to generate jobs for

thousands of Mainers. It is also providing critical improvements to existing highways and the construction of new roads and bridges, and helping to maximize transportation efficiency. All of these combined will make our state's businesses more competitive in the long term. Safe and efficient transportation is vital to the United States' economy, and especially to Maine's economy which depends heavily on tourism and natural resource-based industries. Mike believes that investment in transportation means investment in our jobs and our livelihoods.

As a leading member of the T&I Committee's Subcommittee on Economic Development, Mike crafted and passed his bill in the House to create a Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) on October 4th, 2007. His bill was later passed into law as a part of the Farm Bill in the summer of 2008. In 2004, Mike joined an array of economic development experts and advocacy groups in writing the legislation that would create a commission that would invest federal resources for economic development and job creation in the most economically distressed areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. Mike is currently working with allies in the House and Senate to fund the new commission so that it can be put to work for our region. To learn about the NBRC, click [HERE](#).

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## Transportation Funding

As Chair of the Appropriations Committee in the Maine Senate, Mike transferred significant general fund dollars to transportation, to be sure that we were making a strong investment each year. As a Member of Congress, he has continued to focus on transportation funding and has made it a top priority. Federal funding through multi-year surface transportation authorizations generate thousands of jobs in Maine.

## SAFETEA-LU

On August 10, 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. This act reauthorizes federal surface transportation programs through the end of fiscal year 2009. As a member of the T&I Committee, Mike helped to pass this bill, which authorized a substantial increase in funding for Maine's highways and high priority projects. It authorized \$950 million for Maine highways between 2005 and 2009, representing an average increase of about 30% - or \$44 million - per year from the previous authorized amount. Additionally, Mike was able to

secure \$48.8 million in funding for high need projects in the Second Congressional District alone. This compares to \$45 million for such projects for the entire state in the last authorization bill in 1998.

## 2009 Transportation Bill

While the 2005 bill contained some important policy and funding updates, the final product was ultimately diluted due to the administration's steadfast resistance to adequately funding program levels at what its own Department of Transportation recommended. Because of this, many states have not been able to do fund a number of important projects. Recognizing that more is needed to provide our nation with safe and efficient transportation, Mike is currently working with his colleagues on the T&I Committee to draft a new multi-year highway reauthorization that will adequately address current needs and allow our state's to fund their priorities.

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## Working to Solve the Truck Weight Problem in Maine

For many years now, there has been a mismatch between federal and state truck weight limits in Maine. Mike has been working to fix this discrepancy and correct the problems that it has caused.

Federal laws generally require that vehicles may not exceed 80,000 pounds on federal interstate roads. States may set their own rules on state maintained roads, and Maine has a 100,000 pound limit on its roads. This means that trucks weighing between 80,000 and 100,000 pounds must be diverted off of the Interstate to travel through much of Maine.

Mike strongly believes that allowing trucks of up to 100,000 pounds on the Interstate in Maine would promote safety for our citizens by keeping them on the major highways and away from small towns, schools, and homes. This change would also reduce the highway maintenance costs in Maine because the Interstate, unlike the secondary roads in Maine, are more durable and are built to accommodate heavy vehicles.

Studies have shown that if the weight limit on the Interstate were changed to 100,000

pounds, Maine would see fewer crashes each year, and would also save between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million in reduced pavement repair.

Mike has introduced a bill designated as H.R. 2263, which would give Maine a waiver from federal weight limits and allow 100,000 pound trucks on I-95. He is also currently working with the T&I Committee on ways that they can move forward on this issue in the 2009 transportation bill. Unfortunately, some in Congress remain strongly opposed to any changes in truck weight standards anywhere in the US.

Mike continues to work hard to educate other members of Congress and to build consensus on the need to address this issue. He was successful in securing a T&I Highways and Transit Subcommittee hearing on truck weights on July 9, 2008. Maine Department of Transportation Commissioner David Cole testified before the subcommittee on behalf of the State of Maine's request to exempt the remainder of its Interstate System from federal truck weights so that it is consistent with state weight limits.

A map that helps illustrate the current truck weight inequity in Maine can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

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Transportation and Infrastructure  
Committee - 110th Congress

Ninety-three bills and resolutions under the T&I Committee's jurisdiction in the 110th Congress either have become law or are awaiting the President's signature. These include:

- H.R. 1,  
Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007;
- H.R. 6,  
Energy Independence  
and Security Act of 2007;
- H.R. 802,  
Maritime Pollution Prevention Act of 2008;

- H.R. 1144,  
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Federal Match Relief Act of 2007;
- H.R. 1195,  
SAFETEA-LU Technical Corrections Act of 2008;
- H.R. 1495,  
Water Resources Development Act of 2007;
- H.R. 2095,  
Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 and Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008;
- H.R. 2775,  
to authorize funding for emergency management performance grants;
- H.R. 3246,  
Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007
- H.R. 3311, to  
authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the  
Interstate I-35W bridge located in Minneapolis,  
Minnesota;
- H.R. 3315, to  
provide that the great hall of the Capitol  
Visitor Center  
shall be known as Emancipation Hall;
- H.R. 3495,  
Kids in Disasters Well-being, Safety, and Health Act of 2007;
- H.R. 3985,  
Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act of 2007;
- H.R. 3986, John F.  
Kennedy Center  
Reauthorization Act of 2008;
- H.R. 4343,  
Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act;
- H.R. 6460, Great Lakes Legacy Reauthorization Act of 2008;
- S. 294,  
Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008;
- S. 496,  
Appalachian Regional Development Act Amendments of 2008;
- S. 2766,  
Clean Boating Act of 2008;
- S. 3406, ADA Amendments Act of  
2008; and
- S. 3598,  
Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008.

In  
addition, the T&I Committee was heavily involved in the passage of H.R.  
6532, the Highway Trust Fund Restoration Act.

The

Committee also moved a number of significant bills through the House, only to see them stall in the Senate. Most prominently among them:

- H.R. 720,  
Water Quality Financing Act of 2007;
- H.R. 2830,  
Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007;
- H.R. 2881,  
FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007;
- H.R. 3224,  
Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007;
- H.R. 3247,  
Hurricane Katrina and Rita Recovery Facilitation Act of 2007;
- H.R. 3999, National Highway Bridge  
Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2008;
- H.R. 6052,  
Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008;
- H.R. 6109,  
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Act of 2008;
- H.R. 6493,  
Aviation Safety Enhancement Act of 2008; and
- H.R. 6630, to  
prohibit the Secretary of Transportation from granting authority to a motor carrier  
domiciled in Mexico to  
operate beyond United States  
municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border unless  
expressly authorized by Congress.

The House

economic stimulus package, the "Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act of 2008," called for creating jobs through significant investments in our nation's infrastructure thanks to the influence of T&I leadership. While the bill passed the House and stalled in the Senate, Congress is likely to revisit the issue in November or in 2009 when they reconvene for the 111th Congress.

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